



# Discovering New York : a wonderful human experience !

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## Organizing a cultural trip to Manhattan.

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### *Descriptif :*

In the heart of Manhattan...the strength of living together, of respect of citizenship and solidarity allowing to go beyond borders, meeting other people and truly understanding the richness of our differences while raising young people's eco-responsible awareness.

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In 2014, Clément, Alexandre, Oscar, Joey, Samuel and a few other students launched the crazy bet of **immersing themselves and their classmates in the history of the New York sites** they had studied in class. Thus, the idea of **organizing a cultural trip to Manhattan** with their English teacher was born. Once the project came to life, the teachers supervised it with the conviction that it would allow each of these young people to **realize their dreams**. This objective, within the vocational high school classes, underlines **a deep attachment to the values of living together as well as citizenship**.

Much more than a simple invitation to learn the mechanisms of a foreign language, **the English course is an open door to the world**. Indeed, a trip abroad allows both to put into practice the linguistic notions studied in class as well as to initiate a personal reflection on our **identities as citizens of the world**.

The idea of this trip is above all to **empower the students** by making them actors in each step prior to departure, without offering them a turnkey trip.



With this in view... The various costs of the trip have been set on the basis of close negotiation between the teachers and the service providers (**flights, accommodation, cultural discoveries**, etc.). The students, helped by their teachers, set up the entire stay themselves, without any intermediary, a condition which guarantees the lowest possible cost. The aim of this was also to allow as many students as possible to "**take the trip of their dreams**". These students have rarely left their own cities and are aware of the **opportunity that is being offered to them**. They are transformed into stakeholders in the **project**. The implementation of **fundraising**, such as selling cakes and books, allowed everyone to earn significant profits towards their **travel expenses**. The students were even able to find companies willing to **sponsor** them. **The region** also regularly provides its **support through a grant** that must be applied for. **The students are thus involved in the development of these various actions** throughout the year.

Thus, in connection with the notions studied in vocational education, they can draw up a comparative list of quotes after sending reservation requests in French and/or English depending on the situations (**youth hostels/hotels, transportation companies, group cultural visits, airlines, insurance, town halls, embassies**, etc.). This **active participation**, combined with a wave of **unfailing solidarity**, is decisive for this project and makes it possible to support and encourages families wishing to send their child to a destination to which access seemed unthinkable until then.

The **consideration of the environmental footprint** of this stay should not be neglected either. Aware that certain impacting points remain unavoidable, such as the plane trip, we attach great importance to making students **responsible for their role in limiting the overall carbon footprint** of their stay as much as possible. Thus, before and after the flight, the transfers are exclusively carried out by carpooling, organized by the students themselves. On site, all trips are made on foot or by subway and **an eco-citizen attitude is essential (respect for people, respect for places, selective sorting and zero waste objective)**.

In the same perspective, the **discovery of the city of New York** from the angle of a megalopolis engaged in an **ecological transformation** (with the multiplication of **green rooftops**, the consideration of **energy issues**, the drop in temperature and energy consumption, the presence **detectors for heating, lighting, air conditioning, water**, etc.) also contributes to **raising young people's eco-responsible awareness**. In this dynamic, the ambition of the team in the future is to **develop the project through partnerships with associations to set up actions so as to offset the**

**carbon footprint** of the project (**plantations of trees, solidarity projects**).

The dream quickly becomes reality once **everyone is immersed in the heart of the "urban jungle"**. The opportunity to **explore on foot or by subway the city and its mythical places** : the Statue of Liberty, the Museums of the American Indians, MOMA, or the Guggenheim, encouraging an NBA team at Madison Square Garden or Barclays Center, walking the streets of Manhattan, Broadway or 5th Avenue, climbing to the top of the Empire State Building or the One World Trade Tower, taking the tram to Roosevelt Island, crossing the Brooklyn Bridge, going to a musical on Broadway, getting off the boat to visit the Immigration Museum at Ellis Island, feeling dizzy at the foot of the Flat Iron Building or Rockefeller Center, meditating at the Memorial of 9/11, walking in the footsteps of famous people while crossing Columbia University, discovering the famous district of Wall Street, Little Italy or China Town and hearing all the linguistic sounds, seeing the pretty houses of Brooklyn, littered with decorations for Halloween, even singing during a Gospel in Harlem or strolling in the quiet paths of Central Park, letting yourself be lulled by "the lungs of the city".

This **wonderful human experience** is the source of a desire for all these teenagers to **renew and multiply their mobility and meet other people**.

The considerable strength of these young people is to be **both different and complementary**.

**Our motto : Leave no one behind.**

Our project intends to **demonstrate that anything is possible** : carrying out this school trip with **responsible, daring and united students**. We are certain that **diversity is an asset** and that we can achieve great things together when we **capitalize on each other's differences**. This **challenge**, experienced since 2015, aims for an even wider **acceptance of the notion of diversity**, based on young people with different backgrounds, who do not really know each other at the start, from modest backgrounds or not, sometimes with disabilities, from various origins, who had to get to know each other, **trust each other, accept each other**, until they formed a close-knit group, eager to take off. The first challenge to be met : **the constitution of a united group. The human adventure is rich** : it allows everyone to "**come out of their shells**", to grow and reveal themselves. This adventure opens a new page in their lives, which, we hope, will be ambitious. Let's have in mind that everything is possible ! This **mobility project** has a highly symbolic value that we wish to engrave in the heart of each young person.

Then there is the return, which marks the end (or the beginning ?) of this extraordinary adventure. Then comes the time to **share** with loved ones, to create or recreate a link with others, and to echo the cultural notions studied in class and **in the heart of Manhattan**. Wishing that everyone remembers **the immeasurable strength of LIVING TOGETHER, RESPECT, CITIZENSHIP and SOLIDARITY** in order to **go beyond borders, meet other people and truly understand the richness of our differences**.

Sophie Isel, Lettres-Anglais  
Lycée Saint-André, Niort



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